

MINUTES OF THE REGULAR MEETING OF THE BOARD OF SELECTMEN

April 3, 2014

The regular meeting of the Board of Selectmen was called to order at 7:00 pm in the community room of the North Haven Memorial Library, 17 Elm Street, North Haven, CT.

Members Present

First Selectman, Michael J. Freda

Second Selectman, Timothy M. Doheny

Third Selectman, Sally J. Buemi

Mr. Freda introduced himself and Selectmen Timothy Doheny and Sally Buemi to the meeting.

Mr. Freda asked if there were any public comments relative to the agenda, Mr. Brian Testa asked if there would be any public comment allowed after agenda item number 5. Mr. Freda replied that he would ask the other Selectmen to allow questions.

Mr. Katz asked Mr. Freda to identify the woman filming the meeting. Mr. Freda responded she was from WTNH Chanel 8.

Mr. Doheny motioned to approve the minutes from the Board of Selectmen's Meeting of February 6, 2014 with a second by Miss Buemi.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Mr. Freda read a letter from Gary Amato, Pool Road written to the selectmen regarding the ADA addition to Town Hall. The letter expressed his dissatisfaction with locking of the back doors at the handicap entrance. He stated that he has asked why and was told that the doors were locked for security reasons. He feels it is a waste of taxpayer's money and perhaps illegal. Mr. Freda stated that the ADA does not look at this as a violation. The addition with the elevator allows visitors the ability to access all floors of the Town Hall. He stated that we have had a number of security issues in Town Hall where we had to contact police and he is concerned about the safety of the employees in Town Hall. We have worked to install cabling to allow for video security cameras. Once the installation is complete we will unlock the doors and allow entrance through the back doors.

Mr. Freda then introduced Mr. Raymond Fowler who initiated a campaign several years ago to raise awareness regarding child abuse. Mr. Fowler addressed the Selectmen and audience providing a comprehensive overview of the program and its evolution over the last few years. Mr. Fowler stated that he is continuing the Savannah Hardin candy bar campaign and that he and his wife Sally have passed out over 466 candy bars. He was extremely pleased with the progress that has been made over the last year in particular. He was grateful to Dr. Cronin, Superintendent of Schools for not only keeping his commitment, but exceeding his expectations in the steps taken within the school system to raise awareness and provide education and resources for child abuse. He talked about many of the actions taken throughout Town including posters, cards, pinwheels, TV programs, etc.

Following Mr. Fowler's presentation, Mr. Freda then invited the Registrar's of Voters, Laurie Brangi and Patty Jackson Marshall to address the Board and public to discuss the number and location of polling places for Town Meeting vote on all referenda including annual budget, as well as respond to the comments made by Miss Buemi at the previous Selectmen's meeting. The Registrars provided a very detailed review and explanation of the sequence of events and circumstances leading up to the decision made to consolidate to one polling place for referenda. Miss Buemi responded to the registrars that there was never any intention on her part to attack the integrity of the registrars and respects the work they do. She stated that she believes there are meritorious arguments to the issue of the one polling place, but she does question the process. She continued to speak to the issue. She also noted that being the minority party she does not have the ability to speak with the Selectmen outside of the meeting format. Mr. Doheny stated he had a few emails from residents opposing moving back to 5 polling places. Mr. Freda also read several emails of the many he received all stating that they opposed changing back to 5 polling places for the referendum. They all expressed their concern about using schools for polling during school session. Mr. Freda then opened the meeting to public comment.

Fran Barlett, Quinipiac Avenue, stated that she worked the polls for the last referendum and there were no problems. It saved workers and the money spent on them. There was curbside voting for seniors available.

Mr. Amato, Pool Road, stated he did not think Miss Buemi did anything malicious and doesn't believe that anyone would want to hurt a child. He still would like to see the Town vote on the issue. He also questioned if the Registrars asked for a stipend and small raise with the money saved from the consolidation of polling.

Ms. Brangi stated that they did ask for a small cost of living increase of \$50 a month each. They did ask for a stipend explaining they are in their office for many mandatory hours leading up to and Election Day, many of the hours are unpaid. They asked for \$250 each. Even with the small increases and stipend there is still money remaining.

Mr. Neil Lillo, Spring Road, is in favor of using each of the polling places. He also asked why the minority party can't come to Town Hall to speak with Mike. Mr. Freda explained that according to Charter she can't meet informally, it would constitute a meeting and need to be noticed to the public.

Mr. Brian Testa, Maple Avenue, had several comments with regard to the statements Miss Buemi made at the last meeting. He also did some research of the Town Charter and State Statutes and there was nothing in either. He also reviewed the ROVAC and feels that it states clearly that the Town is not required to use the same polling places for referendum. Mr. Testa also shared the data that he researched regarding the voting records of the three Selectmen. He also feels Ms. Buemi owes the Registrars an apology.

Mr. Fowler, Todd Drive, feels that we have spent a lot of time and energy on the wrong issue. The real issue is, not how many polling places you have, but rather, why aren't people coming out to vote. With only 9% of the public coming out to vote, you only need one polling place.

Sherman Katz, Sherwood Drive, knows we have low voter turnout, when Mike Freda was previously asked if we were going to have the middle school voting would it be at one polling place or five, Mr. Freda stated five. Mr. Freda responded that when he made the statement about the five polling places for the referendum in June, he thought that school would be closed for that referendum. He does support the one polling place.

Charles Wicklein, Hartford Turnpike, asked if we could have a Saturday option. The Registrar's explained that the Charter does state that the budget referendum is held on the third Tuesday in May.

Mr. John Heeran, Debra Lane, encouraged everyone to get your friends out to vote. He also wondered if we could change the Charter to allow Saturday voting.

Chris Brangi, Bailey Road, made several points including that we all have the right to vote, but there is no part of that right that includes where. There are no laws being broken. He disagreed with Miss Buemi's feeling that the Registrars made a unilateral decision and felt there was in fact quite a bit of discussion and collaboration during the process of arriving at one polling place. He also spoke to the incremental savings and the distraction this topic has caused.

Mr. Amato had several additional comments on the matter.

Mr. Freda wrapped up the subject stating that we can't force people to vote, we can only provide notice and encouragement. He stated that the Town is looking into creating a North Haven mobile app that would provide push notifications to residents who sign up for the service. They will have the opportunity to receive a message reminding them to come out and vote. Miss Buemi supports that idea and would like to have more signs. She also does not believe there is anything prohibiting Saturday voting on referendum.

Jay Bard, Sherwood Drive stated that he is Jewish and is not allowed to vote on the Sabbath and feels Saturday referendum would not be appropriate.

Attorney Jennifer Coppola was asked to give a legal opinion regarding the legality of having one polling place for referendum, specifically is there any statutory or Charter requirement that the legislative body must vote on the number of polling places. She stated that it is legal to have one polling place and no statutory or Charter requirement stating that the legislative body (Town Meeting) vote to reduce the number of polling places for referenda. The regulations for elections differ.

Following the discussion of the polling issue for referenda, Mr. Freda provided his Selectman's Overview.

Operational

- Spring 2014 Bulk Pick Up: Curbside collection began on Monday, March 31, 2014 and continues through Friday April 11, 2014. Residents are encouraged to place bulk items at the curb along with their regular sanitation by 5:00 am on their designated sanitation collection day. Please visit the Town's website for specifics regarding acceptable bulk items. www.town.north-haven.ct.us
- Middle School Building Project: Special Town Meeting, Tuesday, April 29th, High School Auditorium 7:00 pm, Referendum, June 17th. Please visit the special website for information regarding the project. www.nhmsproject.com

Financial Update

- Town Budget: No tax increase being proposed this fiscal year. We are still able to increase the Town side of the budget by almost \$937,000 and the BOE by almost \$1,100,000 and maintain a no tax increase. The reasons are two fold that we can achieve a no tax increase even though we are adding to the budget. 1. Our top line revenue is growing; 2. Our insurance costs have decline based on changing the plan designs through the collective bargaining process. With a June 17th referendum on a renovated middle school, the May budget referendum and budget represents

what we can afford versus what we may need.

- Budget 2014-2015: Budget Public Hearing, Tuesday, April 8, 2014 at 7:00 pm NHHS. Annual Budget Town Meeting, Monday, May 12, 2014 at 7:00 pm NHHS. Referendum - Tuesday, May 20th

Economic Development:

- Updates - New Business Initiatives: Five Below into former Staples, ASAP – Urgent Care Center, 297 State Street, Storage Pod Company, Red Thread (creates work place environments – architectural designs, audio visual technology for businesses, universities and health care), Clintonville Manor Update, Best Buy Plaza (6,000 square feet), Marlin's Update, Pratt and Whitney Update, Rustic Oak Update
- Incremental Tax Phase In - Will be bringing to a Special Town Meeting in May or early June.
- EDC Breakfast, Thursday, April 10, 2014, Best Western Plus, North Haven, 7:30 am – Registration, Anyone interested in attending may contact Valerie Goodkin in my office to R.S.V.P.

Noteworthy

- One Town, One Book - On May 10th at 11:00 am at the North Haven Memorial Library, the Library and the North Haven Public Schools are planning a One Town, One Book event kickoff. The program's concept promoting the reading of the same book, unites a community by engaging our families in reading and through activities and events throughout the town. Every elementary school student will be receiving the same book. The book chosen for this initiative is CHARLIE AND THE CHOCOLATE FACTORY by Roald Dahl. Town agencies and local businesses will be participating in the project throughout the year. Please check the Town and Library websites for a listing of programs and events. www.town.north-haven.ct.us www.northhavenlibrary.net.
- North Haven Substance Abuse Action Council- In conjunction with the National DEA event, will hold a Pill Return – Saturday, April 26th at the fire headquarters on Broadway. Hours 10:00 am to 2:00 pm. Drive into the rear, volunteers will be there to take the expired and unwanted medications.
- Earth Day Celebration - April 5th, 2014, North Haven Middle School, 10:00 am – 2:00 pm.

Miss Buemi stated at the conclusion of Mr. Freda's update that she supports his initiative to provide a tax phase in and thinks it's important to help the Town stay competitive. She is happy that it will be presented at a public hearing prior to voting so the public will have an opportunity to weigh in on it. She also noted that she is sad to see the Rustic Oak close. She has many memories over the years and wishes them the best.

Miss Buemi read the following resolution. Mr. Doheny motioned to approve the resolution, seconded by Miss Buemi.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

- A. **NOW THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, That the town of North Haven hereby endorses a Fair Housing Policy to ensure equal opportunity for all persons to rent, purchase, obtain financing and enjoy all other housing-related services of their choice on a non-discriminatory basis as provided by state and federal law; and

BE IT FUTHER RESOLVED, That the chief executive officer of the Town of North Haven or his designated representative is responsible for responding to and assisting any person who alleges to be the victim of an illegal discriminatory housing practice in the Town of North Haven and for advising

such person of the right to file a complaint with the State of Connecticut Commission on Human Rights and Opportunities (CHRO) or the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) or to seek assistance from the CT Fair Housing Center, legal services, or other fair housing organizations to protect his or her right to equal housing opportunities.

Mr. Doheny read the second resolution and Miss Buemi motioned to approve same, seconded by Mr. Doheny.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

- A. **RESOLVED:** That the First Selectman, Michael J. Freda, is empowered to enter into or amend contractual instruments in the name and on behalf of The Town of North Haven, with the Connecticut Office of Early Childhood for a Community Services Day Care Center program, if such an agreement is offered, and to have the corporate seal affixed to all documents required as a part of any offered agreement.

Miss Buemi read the call for a Special Town Meeting to be held on Tuesday, April 29, 2014 at 7:00 P.M. in the auditorium of the North Haven High School, 221 Elm Street to consider and act upon the following:

Appropriation of \$199,250 to (a) compensate Perkins Eastman for pre-referendum design services for the North Haven Middle School Building Project and (b) pay for certain pre-referendum environmental and related testing services to be provided.

Mr. Doheny motioned to approve the call, seconded by Miss Buemi.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Mr. Doheny read the call for the Annual Budget Town Meeting to be held on Monday, May 12, 2014, at 7:00 P.M. in the auditorium of the North Haven High School, 221 Elm Street, North Haven, CT. Referendum to be held on Tuesday, May 20, 2014.

Miss Buemi motioned to approve the call, seconded by Mr. Doheny.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Miss Buemi moved the appointment of Michael J. Freda 90 Highland Park Road to the Central Regional Tourism District for a one year term to expire April 30, 2015, seconded by Mr. Doheny.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Miss Buemi moved the appointment of James D. Nesdale, Jr. (R) 42 Susan Lane as an alternate to the Blight Prevention Appeals Board to fill the unexpired term of Steven M. Miller terminating on June 30, 2014. Mr. Doheny seconded the motion.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Miss Buemi moved the appointment of Robert Kowalewski (R) 5 Wilson Avenue to the Parks and Recreation Commission to fill the unexpired term of Michael Pomichter terminating on December 31, 2015.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes, Buemi – Yes

Miss Buemi recused herself, and Mr. Doheny motioned the approval of the following Property Tax Refunds. Mr. Freda seconded the motion.

Vote: Freda- Yes, Doheny- Yes

- Couture, Christian 65 Vineyard Road, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$97.69

- GMAC 9401 James Ave S ST140, Bloomington, MN 55431 in the amount of \$605.27
- Heinig, Walter III 259 Spring Road, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$143.06, and in the amount of \$143.06, and in the amount of \$151.46
- Honda Lease Trust 600 Kelley Way, Holyoke, MA 01040-9681 in the amount of \$129.37
- Hyundai Lease Titling Tr Box 105299, Atlanta, GA 30348 in the amount of \$365.30
- Murphy, Theresa Ann C/O Mary Simiola Life Use 2 Palmer Road, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$663.50 and in the amount of \$702.50
- Toyota Motor Credit Corp Box 105386, Atlanta, GA 30348 in the amount of \$290.50 and in the amount of \$386.51, and in the amount of 524.38
- USB Leasing 1850 Osborn Avenue, Oshkosh, WI 54902 in the amount of \$330.46
- Viesselman, Dian & Jamie W 33 Pequot Avenue, North Haven, CT 06473 in the amount of \$84.30

Mr. Freda stated that the next meeting of the Board of Selectmen – Thursday, May1, 2014 at 7:00 p.m. in the community room of the North Haven Memorial Library, 17 Elm Street, North Haven, CT.

Mr. Freda asked if there was any public comment. Mr. Brian Testa, Maple Avenue, inquired about putting a non-binding question on the ballot for the referendum. Mr. Freda responded that it is a challenging issue because with a zero tax increase we may not get the voter turnout for a true representation. Miss Buemi commented that years ago there were referendums with a too high, too low question on the ballot.

He then stated that he read something today regarding state funding for education and that North Haven is underfunded. He wondered if we are doing anything about this. Mr. Freda stated that the ECS formula is very complicated. The urban areas receive a lot more and the suburban a lot less. He feels that our state legislators have done a good job of increasing our ECS, but with a declining enrollment that affects our funding.

Mr. Amato inquired about the CON for Yale ER and what happened. Mr. Freda stated they did not receive it from the State, and they will most likely reapply in the future. Regarding Rabina Properties and cleaning up the mess he put a blight ordinance in. Mr. Freda stated that he disregarded the request because we have been dealing with Rabina for months on this clean up and had a commitment for them to clean it up. Jen Coppola stated that we already had received communication from them with a schedule for cleanup which may have been delayed a bit due to weather. Mr. Amato then asked if the Fire Chief who is out on disability, is being permitted to use the Town car and gas. Mr. Freda stated that the Fire Chief is under medical observation and going for tests. We are waiting for the medical status with regard to his disability. Police and Fire for public safety are permitted to use the Town car for personal use so that they can get to an emergency directly with the fastest response time.

Mr. Wicklein wrote to Dr. Cronin regarding student enrollment. Student enrollment is down, SAT scores have not improved and he does not see why the BOE should need more money. Mr. Wicklein inquired about the age of the elementary schools. Mr. Freda stated that we are focusing on the middle school right now. He asked if we are doing a major construction project on the police station. Mr. Freda advised that we are having problems with the windows and leaks in the roof, and we have to address it. He asked if there is an

upcoming revaluation. Mr. Freda said yes next fiscal year. Mr. Wicklein then referred to an article that mentioned student housing and the Town's position that we will not support student housing. Mr. Freda clarified that the housing will be marketed to post graduate students, but will be fair market rental housing and will not be Quinnipiac campus housing under contract with the University.

Mr. Raymond Sonazzaro, Elm Street, states that he doesn't think the picture being painted is that pretty, we have lost businesses in Town and people are losing their homes. We don't need any more banks or eating places. We need construction and industry. He questioned the \$10 million dollars that was allocated for the fire houses and asked if we are monitoring the money. We still have two left that need to be done. Mr. Freda stated that we have roughly \$ 2 million left for those and we are not overspending the budget. Mr. Sonazzaro continued with several questions regarding the fire houses and the proximity to neighboring property. Ms. Sadosky, Director of Public Works, noted that both fire houses went through Planning and Zoning.

With no further comments from the public, Mr. Doheny motioned to adjourn. Miss Buemi seconded the motion and the meeting adjourned at 10:00 pm.